

Week Ending Friday, February 24, 1995

**Message on the Observance of
Presidents' Day, 1995**

February 16, 1995

Greetings to Americans across the country celebrating Presidents' Day, 1995. As citizens gather to reflect upon our nation's rich history, I am proud to salute our former Presidents for the legacy of leadership they have built in this nation.

From the bold example of George Washington to the timeless courage of Abraham Lincoln—the Presidents whose birthdays we commemorate today—each President, in his own way, has sought to use the power of the American government to make our country better, stronger, and truer to the ideals of its charter. Fueled by the mission of our nation's citizens, Presidents of each generation have aspired to serve the common good, recognizing that whether we Americans choose to rise or fall, move forward or backward, we will all do so together. On this special occasion, and in honor of that great tradition, I ask each of you to join in rededicating yourselves to maintaining the freedoms we hold most dear, for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday celebration.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Interview With Brian Lamb of
C-SPAN**

February 17, 1995

Former U.S. Presidents

Mr. Lamb. Mr. President, we're talking in and around President's Day, so I want to see if you could tell us the purpose of having this little thing on your desk that involves

another President—"Dewey Defeats Truman."

The President. Well, of course, that's the famous headline from the Chicago Tribune. I got it when I was in Independence, Missouri, at the Truman Library. And I'm a big admirer of President Truman. He was my neighbor—you know, Arkansas and Missouri border each other—and I always—I like having that on my desk. It reminds me that things are not always what they seem and that it's important to keep fighting. I look at it every day; I have it right there on the desk.

Mr. Lamb. If you could talk to any past President—and I know you just got off the golf links with a couple of them—who would it be, and what would you want to talk to him about?

The President. Well, it's difficult to say which one President I would talk to. For myself, personally, I would talk to Lincoln because I admired him so much, personally, and because I believe he grew so much in the job. His personal growth in the job was extraordinary, and his ability to distill all the forces at work into clear and powerful language was so great.

But there are others. Jefferson, I would like to speak with because he carried around in his very soul the ideals of the Founders. And he found himself in the same position to some extent I find myself in, in a very different historical context, in that he believed deeply in limited Government, he didn't want Government to oppress people, but he felt that there were occasions in which the national interest demanded a level of activism.

In Jefferson's case, he purchased Louisiana, for example, which cost the equivalent of one year's Federal budget. So I think Jefferson understood the kind of complexity that we're facing today. He had a fertile, complex mind, and he understood how to reconcile the bedrock principles and apply